

## TRANSIT EXPANSION STUDY

# Ballard to Downtown Seattle

January 2013

## Exploring transit possibilities between downtown Seattle and Ballard

Sound Transit and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) are partnering on a study of possible transit improvements between Ballard and downtown Seattle. The outcomes of the study are:

- 1) Support implementation of the Seattle Transit Master Plan and study rapid streetcar alternatives.
- 2) Support future Sound Transit Board discussions on long-range high capacity transit (HCT) options. This study will also examine HCT rail potential in this corridor, using light rail as the representative transit mode.

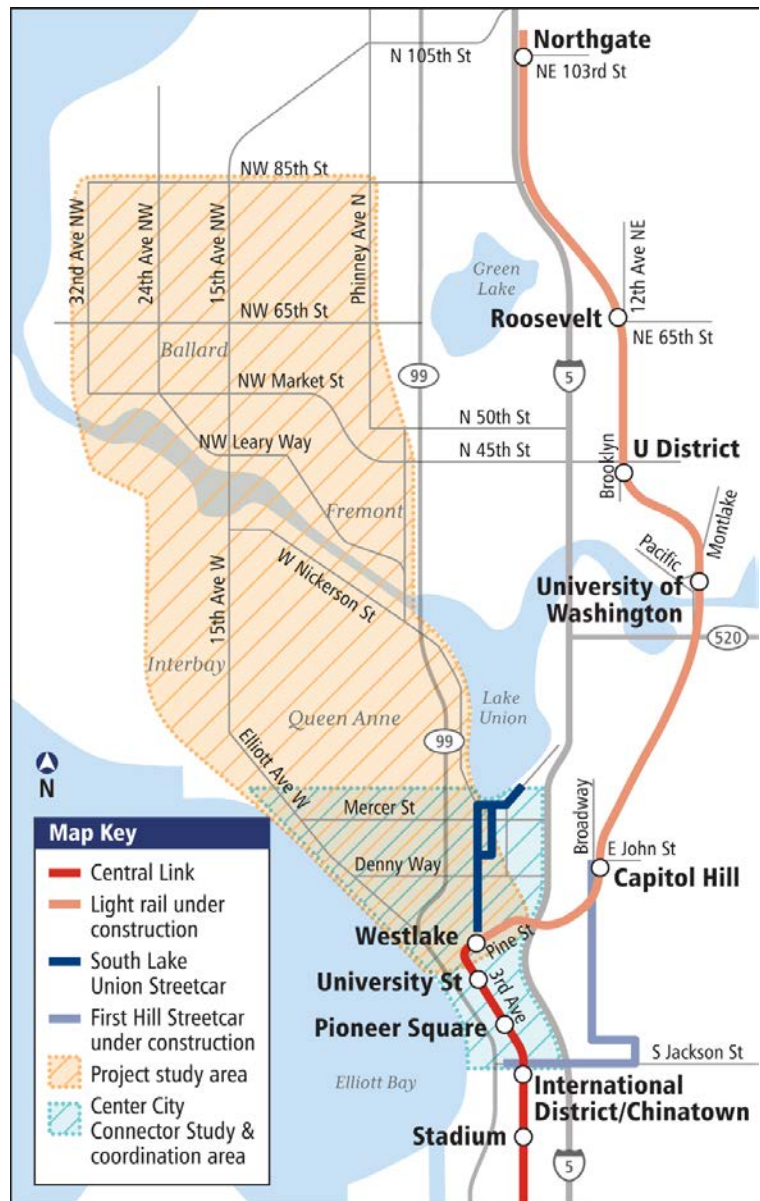
By partnering and increasing efficiencies, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle are saving planning dollars during this project development phase. This study is scheduled to begin in early 2013 and be complete by mid-2014, with many opportunities for public involvement.

Construction of any potential future transit extensions would be subject to Sound Transit and City policy decisions and identification of funding sources. Voter approval is required for potential Sound Transit investments.

### Study Activities

In coordination with a comprehensive public involvement process throughout the study process, the following activities will be completed in the Ballard to downtown Seattle Study:

1. Identify project goals and objectives
2. Identify possible alignments between Ballard and downtown Seattle
3. Evaluate and refine potential HCT light rail and rapid streetcar alignments and station locations



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4. Develop general ridership estimates and cost estimates
5. Summarize and document findings
6. Present findings to the Seattle City Council and Sound Transit Board for possible future action

### Sound Transit's Role

Sound Transit's emphasis is studying "high capacity transit" (HCT) operating principally in exclusive rights of way. That means, for the most part, these services have their own lanes separate from traffic, providing faster and more reliable connections. This study will consider and narrow a range of HCT alternatives, evaluating routes and station locations. In 2008, voters approved the ST2 plan, which includes studying potential HCT options between Ballard and downtown Seattle.

This study will also support upcoming work by the Sound Transit Board to update the Regional Transit Long Range Plan, a process that will involve the public in discussing long-term possibilities and priorities. There have been no decisions so far on when a Sound Transit 3 ballot measure would be considered or what it would fund, including whether a downtown Seattle-Ballard project would be part of it. If the Sound Transit Board decides to advance a regional Sound Transit 3 ballot measure in the coming years, the agency would need to seek approval of additional local funding sources from the Washington State Legislature.

### SDOT's Role

In April 2012, the Seattle City Council adopted the Seattle Transit Master Plan (TMP), which identified five corridors for investment and that the Ballard to downtown corridor would be the first one studied. The TMP focuses on using transit to connecting communities in the City of Seattle. This study will examine rapid streetcar options to connect Ballard and downtown. Rapid streetcars operate primarily on local streets using a combination of exclusive and shared right of way.

The City of Seattle is also conducting the Center City Connector Study which is looking at streetcar options to connect the First Hill Streetcar currently under construction and the South Lake Union Streetcar. The Ballard to Downtown Seattle Transit Extension Study will coordinate with the Center City Connector regarding transit connections in downtown.

#### Stay Informed!

The corridor study officially kicks off in February 2013. Sign up to receive information about the Ballard to Downtown Corridor Study, including meeting announcements at [www.soundtransit.org/subscribe](http://www.soundtransit.org/subscribe) or visit [www.soundtransit.org/ballardstudy](http://www.soundtransit.org/ballardstudy).

Learn more about the Seattle Transit Master Plan at [www.seattle.gov/transportation/transitmasterplan.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/transitmasterplan.htm).